

How To Overcome Fear Of Flying - Pre Flight Tips

People with a fear of flying often fear the build up to taking a flight. Once off the flight, fearful flyers then dread the flight home for the fourteen days that they are away!

The main piece of advice we would give people with a fear of flying is preparation.

Maybe this sounds obvious?

The goal of traveling for anyone is to be as prepared as you can be. There was a saying in the military when I served which was that you are only as uncomfortable as you want to be.

This means giving you the best chances possible. I would divide the preparation into two parts practical and mental.

This article will give you a bit of the mental side to think about.

On the mental side, is it better to fill your head with positive messages you struggle to believe in or fill it with the latest information from Black Box or Crash Files?

Up to you of course. One thing I have noticed as recently as this weekend from people who fear flying is the following.

People with a fear of flying fill their heads with images of mass destruction. They have had years of practising watching how they die in their heads. It is quite a skill and takes a lot of practice but if you really apply yourself, you can really imagine the worst death possible.

If someone told you in the pub that they are rubbish at talking in front of people and it always goes badly. You then ask them how do you prepare for the public speaking then?

They reply that they imagine themselves standing up panicking, being lost for words, everyone laughing at them or their clothes falling off in front of the audience.

You would think them crazy to think about all that before and no wonder it does not go well with that mental preparation before hand.

One of the techniques we are trained in is NLP and we have a saying that you get more of what you pay attention to. In other words, the more that we think about something going wrong or us not coping with something, the more likely we get just that.

If you mentally practice anything enough times, you get better at it. Why not make your brain work for you instead and turn around the thought process.

You cannot afford the luxury of filling your mind with scary stuff. The more you seek out bad news to confirm that you have every right to keep your fear, the harder you make it for yourself to get over it.

I hope that you don't think me out of order. I am talking from watching people be scared and listening to what they say for over nine years.

Try an experiment if you like some convincing. Don't watch the news, listen to the news or read a newspaper for two weeks. If anyone tells you about some disaster in the public arena, say no thanks.

When your two weeks fast is up, watch the news.

I have tried this and I was shocked by how depressing the news is. 90 per cent of it will be bad news apart from the lighthearted story about the tap dancing labrador at the end of the news.

The scariest part when I tried this was not how depressing the news is but how easily I switch myself off to it. Bad news becomes the norm because we don't vet what comes into our heads. There has been some research into the Bystander effect when someone witnesses a disaster or accident and that someone does not step in to help. One reason put forward is that we have been desensitized to violence because there is so much on the TV.

How does this link to you?

The more you fill your head with the dire, the more you think it is normal.

Aircraft have incidents sometimes and when they do it is huge news. They don't crash often enough to justify fearing going on them unless you decide to be scared of every other form of travel too. Go and stand under the Heathrow Flight path and watch an aircraft land every 60 seconds and nothing will happen to any of them.

I was listening to the radio (breaking my own rules) and heard that 25 people are killed or seriously injured on the road every day.

Flying is safe. If things happen it is so rare it is incredible.

Paul Tizzard is one of the Directors of Virgin Atlantic's Flying without fear programme, which puts people back in charge of their lives. If you want to hear answers to the top ten questions people have about flying, visit our website <http://www.flyingwithoutfear.info>